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MX

Almost there...

KTM came closer to a 2012 AMA/FIM premier class title double at the historic British Grand Prix/MXGP Festival at Matterley Basin. Tony Cairoli was unchallenged for his eighth win from thirteen this season and has a lead of more than one Grand Prix with just three remaining. Look inside to see how Tommy Searle wowed the crowd in the UK

Photo by Ray Archer







Don't look now...

Valentino Rossi talked about some of the reasons for his headliner move back to Yamaha at round eleven of the MotoGP series in Indianapolis and the tricky Brickyard asphalt. The Italian now potentially faces the prospect of being the 'number two' in a team for the first time in a MotoGP career that began in 2000

Photo by www.yamahamotogp.com



MotoGP



PLAY





Over and out...

Ryan Dungey finally put the AMA 450 class to bed with his eighth victory of the year at Unadilla for round ten. The party scenes celebrating the 22 year old's second motocross title and a landmark first for KTM in the American market they have spent so long trying to crack. For team overseer Roger de Coster it is yet another garland for an incomparable CV

Photo by Hoppenworld.com



AMA-MX



TEST

Italian menu...

For some MV Agusta is the Lamborghini of motorcycling and the definition of Italian style and desirability on two wheels. With the launch of the F3 and Brutale the small factory are chasing a wider fanbase. Read on to see what Roland Brown thought of the marque's midsize offerings on the track and the street

Photo by Milagro



PLAY





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MX

BRITISH GRAND PRIX/MXGP FEST

MATTERLEY BASIN · AUGUST 19th · Rnd 13 of 16

MX1 winner: Tony Cairoli, KTM

MX2 winner: Tommy Searle, Kawasaki




IVAL

HOME HERO

By Adam Wheeler. Photos by Ray Archer www.rayarcher.com







Searle has shown some authentic class in 2012 with several ride-thru-the-pack performances but Matterley saw the Brit in supreme form. The 23 year old has won five Grands Prix compared to Herlings' seven so far this season

There were over 300 riders at Matterley Basin and among the myriad of stories of epic performances, woe, elation, disappointment and bravery there were just three that went on to scoop the headlines.

Tommy Searle produced a faultless display to a 1-1 scorecard that the legions of his raucous fans had been dreaming about in the build-up to the meeting. Not only was the Monster Energy Pro Circuit Kawasaki rider superb and resolute under the flattening pressure of his home Grand Prix but he also beat arch-rival Jeffrey Herlings, who slipped off on the last laps of both motos pushing to upset the party...much to the noisy glee of the public who'd booed, jeered and made their distaste of Herlings' antics this season blatantly obvious. Herlings was a pantomime villain for the majority but he was also an effective protagonist, shadowing Searle for the entire second moto and shutting down a massive gap in the closing stages of the first to ensure the MX2 contest was tense throughout the day and easily dwarfed the MX1 races for entertainment, which is not something we've been able to say on too many occasions in 2012.

The third star of the British GP/MXGP Festival was undoubtedly Tony Cairoli. Career victory number 51, eighth win of the year, fourth in a row and sixth double moto haul. The dominance converted into a 55 point difference and the reigning number one can start to look at a fourth MX1 title party in four years, and maybe in front of his own fans with races in Holland, Italy and Germany respectively remaining on the calendar.

The Red Bull KTM rider darted away in the opening laps and although the likes of Max Nagl (first podium of 2012 in only his second Grand Prix), Ken De Dycker and Gautier Paulin (a welcome return to the podium for the Frenchman after a worrying mid-season dip) showed good speed there was nobody on the Sicilian's level. The chances of Cairoli enjoying his own company on the track where he cites his 2006 MX2 category victory as one of his best races were increased when Rockstar Suzuki and Monster Energy Pro Circuit Kawasaki's Christophe Pourcel both crashed on Saturday.

The Belgian and Frenchman, who are second and third in the MX1 standings respectively, carried the ills of their accidents on Sunday and were never in contention for trophies.

Notable mentions across the classes include Zach Osborne (second MX2 podium on the trot), Jake Nicholls (surely the crowd's prospective MX2 hero for 2013), Evgeny Bobryshev (a season-best fourth place in the second moto on the factory Honda), Maxime Desprey (usurping Mel Pocock in the EMX2 series) and Kiara Fontanesi who became Italy's first FIM Women's World Champion with one round to go.

One major element of this thirteenth round of sixteenth was the Matterley Basin course. Greg Atkins, Justin Barclay and Johnny Douglas Hamilton and his crew deserve silverware as much as the riders for the condition and work put into the track to ensure its continued status as the best on the Grand Prix schedule. Flow, lines, bumps and spectacle; Matterley has it all and four ten hour days of action on the soil was barely noticeable.

"It was a great track and the conditions were perfect," offered Arnaud Tonus who was sixth overall in MX2 after returning to the GP fray in the wake of further wrist surgery. "The ground was dry in the sun but they kept it fresh and there were still a lot of lines. You could pass pretty much everywhere but it was tough physically because it was so rough."

"They did a good job putting this thing on," assessed Monster Energy Yamaha team-mate Osborne who negotiated his last British GP for the near future. "It is probably the biggest motocross event that they have ever put on in Europe. I'm pretty impressed that they actually handled it. Like I said in the Czech Republic it is hard enough to get a flight and a hotel from Steve [Dixon, Team Manager and GP organiser] let alone expect a four day GP! I'm happy with how it went and the weather stayed good."





Cairolì has won two of his five world titles in the sand of Lierop (round fourteen on September 5th). It would be too much to expect another Dutch party this time but Faenza the following week could witness another crowning after the extraordinary scenes with David Philippaerts in 2008



For the second time in nearly three months Desalle found himself having to concentrate on his job while dealing with the loss of a member of his family. His crash running off the track on Saturday was scary and he was lucky only to injure his right hand. The Belgian's weakened state robbed MX1 of any element of entertainment as Cairoli floated alone at the front





Launch time. At the centre of this pic Monster Energy Yamaha's Kristian Whatley (23) was making his wild-card bow on the factory bike. The Brit would crash and hurt his shoulder in the first moto



This moment on Saturday ruined the British Grand Prix for Christophe Pourcel who could only classify 15th overall and effectively ended any outside chance of a run at Cairoli and the MX1 title. The Frenchman's future still remains in the air





Max Nagl is still on a mission to prove to many people that he has a lot to offer. A podium in just his second Grand Prix was a resounding message to KTM who have let him go for 2013 and to the factory Honda and Suzuki teams that are courting his signature



It wasn't all anti-Herlings. Some Dutch fans attempted to address the balance but the championship leader was heckled around most of the circuit. His crash on the last lap of the first moto instigated a cheer a football crowd would have been proud of...



Mel Pocock grabbed a second position in the last moto of the MXGP Festival but it was not enough to continue his four round unbeaten run in the EMX2 series. The factory team-bound Brit shows the best line over the finish line jump...







Two podiums for Osborne hints at what the American might have been able to do in 2012 if he hadn't wrecked his shoulder in a blameless pre-season crash

CLASSIFICATION & WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

MX1 OVERALL RESULT

Riders

1	Tony Cairoli, ITA	KTM
2	Max Nagl, GER	KTM
3	Gautier Paulin, FRA	Kawasaki
4	Ken de Dycker, BEL	KTM
5	Xavier Boog, FRA	Kawasaki

MX2 OVERALL RESULT

Riders

1	Tommy Searle, GBR	Kawasaki
2	Jeffrey Herlings, NED	KTM
3	Zach Osborne, USA	Yamaha
4	Jeremy Van Horebeek, BEL	KTM
5	Jake Nicholls, GBR	KTM

MX1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 13 OF 16 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Tony Cairoli	542
2 Clement Desalle	487
3 Christophe Pourcel	452
4 Gautier Paulin	440
5 Ken De Dycker	404

MX2 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 13 OF 16 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Jeffrey Herlings	572
2 Tommy Searle	521
3 Jeremy Van Horebeek	475
4 Joel Roelants	367
5 Jake Nicholls	359



Kiara Fontanesi becomes only the third FIM Women's World Champion and Italy's first. There is still one round to go in the series but the eighteen year old from Parma has yet to finish outside the top three in fourteen motos. Impressive stuff...

MX NEWS

YOUTHSTREAM LAUNCH MXGP FESTIVAL

If the measure of an event's success can be deemed through the degree of good feeling, positive vibes and atmosphere then the first MXGP Festival was an utter triumph. In case you missed it the British Grand Prix was to all intents and purposes eclipsed by the inaugural edition of this spectacle that FIM World Championship promoters Youthstream want to hoist and develop to a similar level of status as the Motocross of Nations. Ten classes and 339 riders, four days of activity and a defining parade lap; the 'MXGPF' made its mark.

Some realistic and equally important factors for the event to grow and prosper (at least in the UK where Matterley Basin was one of the few capable circuits able to entertain the notion of the Festival) like profitability and logistical functionality are still to be debated and scrutinised. If Youthstream have time before heading to Bulgaria for the FIM Junior World Championships this weekend and then the final three Grands Prix and the Motocross of Nations all in September then a careful review needs to be made to see if other organisers and venues can consider taking on a meeting of this size and extending the promoter's wish to hold a maximum of three MXGPFs in a year.

Over the four days Youthstream staff and Steve Dixon's small organisational crew were pushed to the limit with double or treble the workload of a normal Grand Prix. It is a huge credit to all involved that Matterley Basin – with a little help from the excellent weather and a performance by Tommy Searle that will live long in the memory – leaves such a feeling of hope that the Festival might actually be a sustainable and crucial part of future Grand Prix calendars.

"If we believe in something then we must go for it," said Youthstream President Giuseppe Luongo. "For sure we were lucky with the weather but in a few years we hope this can be something we look forward to like the Motocross of Nations. It is extraordinary."

"This is something we wanted for many years," opined the FIM's Motocross Commission President Dr Wolfgang Srb. "To see so many youngsters and riders and with the new systems in place for their development and events like this then our future is bright. To give them the chance to do something like train on the same pitch as Wayne Rooney then you can understand why something like the MXGP Festival is so important."





NATIONS TEAM GBR DEBATE

Matterley Basin was the scene for an announcement on the trio selected to represent Britain at the 66th Motocross of Nations. Two of the riders were shoe-ins: Tommy Searle (riding a 450 in the MX1 category for a 2013 'preview') and Jake Nicholls (on the 250 in MX2) but the final slot in MX3 went down to a choice between Monster Energy Yamaha rider Shaun Simpson and Gariboldi Esta's Max Anstie. Anstie received the nod to ride a 450 Honda in the Belgian sand on September 30th and the majority opinion in the press room was that incoming team manager Neil Prince had taken a harsh decision against Simpson who is currently tenth in the MX1 world championship standings and Britain's only regular Grand Prix campaigner in the premier class.

There is widespread belief that Anstie's encouraging performance in the sand of Hawkstone Park for a wild-card British Championship appearance several weeks ago where he defeated Simpson on a stock Honda CRF450R (Simpson was also having technical problems) led to the axe falling on the Scot's head. Anstie is a decent sand rider, but then so is Simpson with the latter living in Belgium for most of the year and his sole Grand Prix moto victory came in the soft stuff at Valkenswaard in 2009. Anstie started the MX2 season in fine form but has had some torrid results and confidence issues with the Honda MX2 machine that has been woefully inconsistent.

Mechanical problems at Matterley Basin banished Anstie to mid-pack obscurity. It is doubtful he would have made the team with an MX2 slot. Simpson has not had an outstanding term as part of the factory Yamaha set-up but has shone in fits and starts and came close to a podium finish in Sweden last month.

"It was a very, very hard decision," commented Prince, who, perhaps on reflection, could have made his choice and informed Simpson earlier than Saturday afternoon at Matterley Basin.

"I am honoured to be part of a team and event of elite athletes," said Anstie, who might have felt his selection was vindicated after he was overlooked in 2011 for Dean Wilson. "The 450 and that extra power suits me. I have spent a lot of time in the sand around Lommel and it is all about who can keep going."

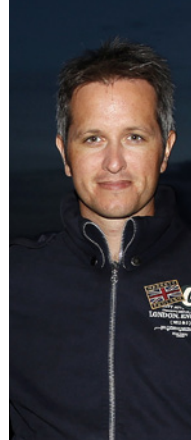
Nicholls: "I feel like I have been picked outright this time compared to 2010 where I came in and did a job. Max's situation is a bit of a different story and he has struggled with machinery this year. Shaun is a good friend and I know he must feel he has earned his spot too." Simpson, one of the most articulate and popular riders in the paddock was stoic and diplomatic and worthily pointed out that there are still plenty of races left before the fixture in Belgium and anything could happen.

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THE GREAT RESPONSIBILITY...

By Adam Wheeler



The MXGP Festival showed some of motocross' vast strengths as a spectator sport and elements that should carry the discipline as a top-flite motorsport into the future. The Festival was an expanded Grand Prix but by picking one of the best-attended and atmospheric settings on the calendar Youthstream hedged their bets. A baffling amount of action, colour and skill ensured that motocross' core advantages – proximity for the fans to the track, bikes and stars and the well-priced entry ticket compared to other series – came to the fore.

The size of the event was a headline-maker. Matterley housed more spectators and riders than usually found at a Grand Prix and it pushed the image and profile of the FIM Motocross World Championship's main stars further into the spotlight. Motocross attracts younger fans and kids than perhaps more any other motorsport (and surveys have proved that the following for Formula One and MotoGP are not particularly rich in the teenage bracket). There is the participation factor for starters; kids – and usually many adult motorcyclists later in life – will have their first two-wheeled experience on the dirt or through MX's distant cousin BMX. Then there is the 'hero factor'. It is easy for a youngster to follow the likes of Cairoli, Searle, Paulin etc because he or she can actually see and interact with his or her idol. The margin for this precious but overlooked aspect of racing is narrower in other disciplines, even in something like Supercross that rattles through a timetable with the precision of a military operation. Having been on the inside of the paddock for well over a decade I often see how the pressures and demands of a race weekend mean that the little kid waiting patiently with a parent and a poster to sign is the last thing a rider wants to consider. There might be limitations on how much a rider can 'give' but enriching a kid's Grand Prix experience

(especially if it is his/her's first, or one of a few each year) can win a fan for a long time and – realistically – it is an easy interchange for both parties. Nothing like the hours and devotion a fan might need for just a glimpse of Valentino Rossi at MotoGP (if they were lucky to get paddock passes).

This raises issues about rider's perception of their job. They are 'only motocrossers' so their media and public demands are on a much lower level relatively compared to cars or road racing but the fact that they have this very tangible contact with the people requesting (in the case of a kid) or paying (the parent) for entry, bikes and accessories mean that they have even more responsibility to ensure they are doing the job correctly.

There are some racers right at the top of the GP tree who still subscribe to the 'my job is results' mantra, which is a big percentage of their role but not all of it. My feeling is that a great many are missing the possibilities of promoting the sport even more by not taking their own initiative. Anything less than a positive attitude to media and PR opportunities is not acceptable. Why don't we see renowned GP riders hooking-up with Grand Prix organisers to get a bike, wad of posters, large TV screen, some t-shirts or freebies from a supporting brand and a small display into a shopping centre over a weekend before a major event?

Motocrossers need to train and ride and have a hefty schedule but there has to be time for the other side. From an individual viewpoint who's to say they won't meet any prospective personal sponsor?

I'm sure any potential backer would love and appreciate the lowered barriers between sporting star and 'joe public' and motocross is well placed to exploit this, regardless of the scale.





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AMA-MX

RED BULL NATIONAL

UNADILLA, NY · AUGUST 18th · Rnd 10 of 12

450 winner: Ryan Dungey, KTM (champion)

250 winner: Marvin Musquin, KTM



FINALLY WRAPPED

By Steve Matthes, Photos by Steve Cox, Hoppenworld.com



Unadilla, an iconic track here in America, served up an iconic day of racing that nobody present will forget for one reason or another. Tucked away in eastern New York state, the track has hosted a national for twenty years and was the place for GP's and Trans-AMA series. Nowadays it's a fixture on the national scene and although it's not too many people's favorite, it's definitely served up some great racing over the years.

And this past Saturday, it was historic for a few reasons. The Austrian manufacturer KTM has been making a push worldwide for a few years here and in the same season that they signed arguably their biggest name in Ryan Dungey, they won their first ever 450 motocross championship as Dungey went 1-1 once again. Combined with Mike Alessi's mechanical foul in the first moto, the inevitable happened. Dungey captured his second 450 outdoor title and after the drama of last weeks gas stop, this week offered more of the same but thankfully for Ryan and KTM, it was others who were responsible for the suspense.

Early in the first moto with Dungey unable to move through the pack with his regular speed, BTOSports.com Michael Byrne led the most laps. Byrner inherited the lead after Kawasaki's Jake Weimer augured hard early on. Byrne, one of the vets in the class, had really been riding well on the privateer bike and seemed to have his and his team's first national win in the bag. With six minutes left, he had a nice eight-second lead on Pro Circuit's Broc Tickle and Dungey. Then disaster struck when Byrne got sideways in some nasty rollers, put his leg out and promptly broke it. The Cinderella story was over.

Sort of. It was now Tickle's turn to lead and possible win but in the end, with very little time left Dungey made the pass. The robotic and very fast Dungey basically clinched the title after this, with Alessi and Weimer not scoring any points. In the second moto, Alessi kept him honest but Dungey won again and KTM stood atop American motocross as the premier team in the premier class for the first time.

What a gamble by KTM to first hire Roger DeCoster (which was a serious investment), bring an all-new 450 out, get Dungey's name on a contract and then win a major portion of the races this year.

Yes, there were some injuries by his main competitors but Dungey and KTM can't control that. All they can control is their machine and their program and both took a huge leap forward in 2012.

Speaking of injuries, Yoshimura Suzuki's James Stewart made a surprise return to the series and early in the first moto had a nice four-second lead on Byrne when he washed his front end out. Unable to start his machine for a while Stewart salvaged a ninth and hoped to show more of his speed in Moto2. But as we've seen so many times before, Stewart crashed hard in the second moto and DNF'd with a fractured finger. That's it for James's season that started off with a switch to Suzuki and four straight moto wins. We saw some glimpses of the old Stewart but unfortunately, the crashes were still there also and without being 100%, it wasn't pretty to watch after his injury in Colorado.

And while we're espousing KTM for all that they've done in the 450 class, it was a KTM sweep as two-time World Champion Marvin Musquin won his first ever motocross overall in America with steady 2-3 scores. It was the first time KTM has ever aced both wins at an AMA national and besides that, it was a monumental day for Ken Roczen as he won his first moto here. It took longer than most of us thought and he was so close so many times, but Roczen, on the most European-like track on the circuit, simply rode away from everyone the first time out.

King Kenny was unable to back that up in the second moto and lost in the Roczen hype has been Musquin but the Frenchman has really been getting better and better as this season goes on. Watching GEICO Honda teammates Eli Tomac and Justin Barcia sprint away in the second moto, Musquin admitted afterwards he knew he had the overall and started riding tighter and tighter. In the end, it worked out for Marvin, and Ken's breakthrough first moto was also a positive sign for him and KTM. Well, I guess you'd say it's all been working out for KTM since they got Ryan Dungey's name on a contract. What a day for them!





At last! Marvin Musquin finally grabs a result that his talent merits. The Frenchman is a wonderfully stylish motorcycle racer but might need to further stiffen his mental resolve to crack the AMA scene



Blake Baggett missed
out on the podium at
Unadilla but hangs onto
that red plate...only just

Finally. Ken Roczen silences some of the critics with a maiden AMA chequered flag. The first for Germany perhaps?





Justin Barcia is still seeking the Lites/250 double before the 450 beckons. A preview to what his rivals might expect will come at the end of September at the MX of Nations

Could the unthinkable happen and Pro Circuit end a racing season without a title? Mitch Payton contemplates the scenario but could take partial solace from Broc Tickle's 450 podium breakthrough





AMA-MX CLASSIFICATION & CHAMPIONSHIP

AMA 450 OVERALL RESULT

Riders

1	Ryan Dungey, USA	KTM
2	Broc Tickle, USA	Kawasaki
3	Andrew Short, USA	Honda
4	Davi Millsaps, USA	Yamaha
5	Josh Grant, USA	Kawasaki

AMA 450 STANDINGS (AFTER 10 OF 12 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Ryan Dungey	480
2 Mike Alessi	367
3 Andrew Short	311
4 Jake Weimer	293
5 Broc Tickle	293

AMA 250 OVERALL RESULT

Riders

1	Marvin Musquin, FRA	KTM
2	Eli Tomac, USA	Honda
3	Ken Roczen, GER	KTM
4	Justin Barcia, USA	Honda
5	Blake Baggett, USA	Kawasaki

AMA 250 STANDINGS (AFTER 10 OF 12 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Blake Baggett	436
2 Justin Barcia	412
3 Eli Tomac	408
4 Ken Roczen	385
5 Marvin Musquin	336



Jake Weimer was one of several riders in sight of victory in the first moto but escaped lightly from a crash. James Stewart (broken finger later on) and Michael Byrne (broken leg) were not so lucky

Asterisk

ROCZEN NEARLY THERE

Before Unadilla there were a few of us thinking that there's not much more that defending MX2 world champion Ken Roczen of the Red Bull KTM team can do to win a moto here in America this summer. The German superstar has led motos for the longest time and there was a worry that he might not be able to make it happen in '12.

Roczen has had a tendency to get passed late in races and got a whole bunch of 'almosts' here, his first term in America. He's almost won motos, he's almost won races, he's almost in good enough shape and he's going to be almost the 250 champion this year. Him, Justin Barcia, Eli Tomac and Blake Baggett have clearly been the four fastest guys this year (with a firm tip of the cap to Marvin Musquin) so there's that.

Kenny's been a great addition to the series and he's going to be much better next year when he has a handle on everything and knows what to expect. I remember talking to Tyla Rattray who was in the same spot as Roczen is this year not so long ago.

Coming off an MX2 title, Rattray jumped to America and struggled. He wasn't as good as Roczen was this year and that first summer (he got hurt halfway through and missed six races) he was a fifth-to-sixth place guy. In talking to Tyla now, he admits that the hurried American schedule of just a couple of practices the morning of the race hurt him more than he anticipated. The GP's offer two sessions, one qualification race and a warm-up before the motos. In the States, it's two 20 minute practices and then go-time.

Rattray had to learn the tracks, the way they formed, the aggressive nature of American racing in a short time. And he did learn it to the tune of Rattray being a top rider in the 250 class for the last two years. Roczen will follow this same path methinks. He's doing better than Rattray did that first season and he's figuring things out.

He's too young, too fast and too smart to not.





Hoppenworld.com

KTM SHARP IN THE PIT'S ALSO

As we know by now, Ryan Dungey won the Southwick national via 1-2 scores and sure, he doesn't like the lose a moto (it was to Kawasaki's Tyla Rattray who crashed way back in the first moto) but his 1-2 score sure looks a lot better than the 1-DNF that he was so very close to getting.

Dungey took the lead early in the second moto and was doing his 'Dungey thing', which is stretching the gap between him and second place when he went down. In a total freak accident, something hit the cap in the exact spot and in the exact manner to spin it off the bike. Dungey got up, screwed it back on, passed his way back by Mike Alessi and took off once again.

But replays on the TV showed that a significant amount of fuel had spilled out of the machine while it lay on the ground. It was at that point that the Red Bull KTM team had to make a choice. Pull him in for a splash of gas or cross their fingers and hope for the best? The decision was made to pull Ryan into pit, and he built a lead of about 11 seconds.

Unfortunately, he lost about three of those seconds when the lap before he pulled in, he slowed and looked into the mechanic's area to see if he should have pulled in. The very next lap he did indeed enter and the KTM guys topped him off. He exited right behind Rattray but was unable to make the pass in the remaining four laps. The move saved the overall win for Ryan but after it happened, the question was: Did it have to happen?

After the race I spoke with Dungey's mechanic Carlos Rivera and he indicated to me that there was no way that Ryan would have finished had he not pulled in. The amount of gas remaining after moto 1 plus the amount of gas remaining after the top-off pit stop convinced Carlos that the right call was made. Southwick is a gas-eater (ask Brett Metcalfe who ran out on the last lap a couple of years ago while in the lead) and the OEM tanks are getting smaller and smaller. The margin of error isn't much and it gets narrower at Southwick. Great move by Carlos and the KTM guys to save an overall win for their team and I have to admit, after weeks and weeks of Ryan Dungey runaways, it added some drama to the day!

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TEAM USA READY FOR THE 8th...

By Steve Matthes

Team USA was named last week before the motos got underway at Southwick and it wasn't really a surprise. The 2012 450 motocross champion Ryan Dungey will ride MX1, 250 points leader Blake Baggett will ride MX2 (and hopefully avenge his so-so finishes from last year) and as expected Justin Barcia got the MX3 spot on the 450.

Barcia rides for the GEICO Honda team on a 250 here in America but next year he's moving to the factory Honda truck for a 450 ride full-time and at the MXDN, he'll be on a factory Honda bike. The sands at Lommel are deep and nasty but no matter, in this reporter's opinion Team USA is always the favorite for the MXDN. The sheer number of riders the country has to pick from and the talent make it so. You could argue a case for Mike Alessi to have been chosen but team manager Roger De Coster has managed Mike before and definitely doesn't think Alessi and his father Tony are the right pick for the team. Roger mentioned in an interview that he worries about the lack of support for Alessi over in Europe (Alessi rides for a privateer team that is not factory supported) but to me, that's a cover for "I just don't want Mike and his dad on the team because I've managed them before and I don't trust them" because Alessi's team is well-funded and there would be more than enough backing there for Mike.

Roger's the manager (assisted by Mitch Payton) and it's his call in the end. As I say, the third racer could be a number of guys and the team would be stacked - it's an embarrassment of riches really. De Coster was a big reason why the Americans went back to the MXDN in 1981 and he's been a driving force behind the team since then (save for a couple of years) so most of us can't really question De Coster's motives or decisions.

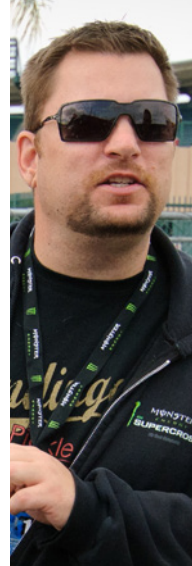
I myself do think that Mike should have been selected for Belgium but again, the team is stacked and Barcia is a great sand rider. He'll do fine as the MX3 guys job is to just put it in the top three and go from there. Barcia's a rookie for the MXDN but is there any doubt that he's one of the rising stars of motocross and will represent USA more in the future?

The Nations won't be easy but the U.S. has an embarrassment of riches

This MXDN won't be easy for the Americans as the track isn't really like anything they ride during the year and racers like Jeffrey Herlings and Antonio Cairoli will give the American riders trouble but all the American guys are in great shape and fast.

The depth of the other countries just isn't there. Perhaps Belgium with Clement DeSalle, Ken De Dyker and Jeremy van Horebeek will be in contention and possibly can be co-favorites with USA but other than that, I just don't see it.

It seems that Belgium, long a motocross power, has trotted out a team year after year that always seems to be there (their last win was in 2003 when this correspondent was a Team USA member as Tim Ferry's mechanic - that's something I'll always treasure by the way) and maybe in front of the home crowd, they'll stand atop the podium. But judging by the riders that De Coster selected, or could have selected, Team USA is looking good to win their eighth straight Chamberlain trophy.



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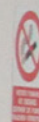
WALLETS AT THE READY



MV AGUSTA'S NEW 675s

By Roland Brown, Photos by Milagro





There's no more glamorous name in motorcycling than MV Agusta. The marque won countless races and world championships through legendary riders including Surtees, Hailwood and Agostini. It built exotic but unprofitable race-replicas before abandoning production in the late Seventies. And since being reborn 15 years ago the firm from Varese in northern Italy has produced drop-dead gorgeous superbikes with prices to match.

But even MV realise that building only high-end bikes in the current financial climate is likely to see history repeating itself. (The financial failure, not the championships.) Hence the introduction of a pair of middleweight models, the F3 and Brutale 675, powered by a 675cc, three-cylinder engine, and designed to attract a broader group of customers.

Just because these MVs have smaller engines it doesn't mean to say they're ordinary. On the contrary the super-sports F3 is a beautifully stylish little machine whose maximum power output of 128bhp matches that of the class-leading Kawasaki ZX-6R. The Brutale roadster, similarly styled to its larger capacity namesake, is more softly tuned but still kicks out 108bhp, competitive with Triumph's class yardstick the Street Triple.





TEST

MV's racing heritage ensured that the firm's engineers had one thing in mind when creating the F3: make it the fastest and lightest bike in its class. Its 12-valve, liquid-cooled engine's short-stroke dimensions allow it to rev to a heady 15,000rpm.

It has the most sophisticated engine management system yet from a middleweight, incorporating ride-by-wire throttle control with a choice from four engine maps, plus an adjustable traction control system.

Chassis layout follows that of MV's four-cylinder F4 models, so is based on a frame that combines tubular steel main sections with aluminium castings. The triple also follows the four-cylinder model in having a single-sided aluminium swing-arm. High quality suspension and radial Brembo brake calipers complete a suitably upmarket specification.

The F3 rides as well as it looks, too — provide you're prepared to wring its neck. Even by middleweight standards this is a demanding machine that has to be revved above 10,000rpm, and preferably 12,000rpm, through the gears to give of its best.

Ride it that way, preferably on a racetrack like the launch venue of Circuit Paul Ricard in the south of France, and it's fast and great fun.

The trio of stubby silencers howled a high-pitched tune as the F3 headed towards its top speed of about 160mph. But although the motor was also smooth at lower revs, the MV didn't have the midrange punch that helps make Triumph's rival Daytona 675 triple so enjoyable. Those initial launch F3s also suffered from a low-rev throttle glitch that was more noticeable on the road. MV say they've since cured the problem with a software update.





One thing that didn't need updating was the F3's chassis, which gave a superb blend of light, easy steering and high-speed stability. Its agility, possibly helped by the engine's contra-rotating crankshaft (which reduces inertia) was useful through the circuit's chicane. And its stability was even more welcome through the bum-clenchingly fast Signes right-hander at the end of Ricard's famous Mistral Straight.

The racy F3 isn't a bike for every rider; it's too aggressive and demanding for some. But it is a wonderfully quick and sweet-steering bike with a touch of class that makes it feel special. And its price of £9999 is within ten per cent of some Japanese rivals'.

TEST



“The Brutale 675 is considerably less expensive and brings MV ownership within reach of even more people.”

“The racy F3 isn’t a bike for every rider; it’s too aggressive and demanding.”

MV AGUSTA 675s





At £8299 the Brutale 675 is considerably less expensive still, and brings MV ownership within reach of even more people. That includes women, who have been targeted with the triple's low seat, light weight and compact dimensions.

Although this Brutale has the stubby, aggressive styling of its larger capacity namesakes, it is notably more rider friendly.

Its engine is detuned with different pistons and cams to the F3, and compensates for its 20bhp power reduction with a more even-spread of torque. Having just entered production, several months after the sports model, it incorporates the fuelling update. As I pulled away from the Varese factory the bike was happy to accelerate with less than 5000rpm showing on its digital rev-counter.

But if that makes it sound like a sensible, everyday kind of bike, think again. This Brutale isn't as barking mad as its large-capacity namesakes, but it's still a fiery, rev-happy little machine that was very happy being thrashed to its 13,000rpm limit. It responded with arm-yanking acceleration and a tuneful three-cylinder exhaust note as it headed towards a top speed of about 140mph.





Handling was superbly agile, with a nudge of the raised handlebars all that was needed to flick through turns almost as if they didn't exist. Stability at speed was fine, too. But the sharp-steering, hard-braking Brutale couldn't quite match the Street Triple's wonderfully neutral, rider-friendly feel.

Compared to its British rival the Brutale is more expensive and perhaps not quite as suitable for less experienced riders. Like the F3 it's a sharp, aggressive machine with a touch of Italian style, performance and attitude. Even these mid-dleweights are not for everyone, then. But for glamorous MV Agusta they're a step in the right direction.



MotoGP

RED BULL U.S. GRAND PRIX

LAGUNA SECA · JULY 29th · RND 10 of 18

MotoGP winner: Casey Stoner, Honda

**PEDROSA
ONE
BETTER**

Photos by Honda Pro Images, www.yamahamotogp.com, Ducati Corse, Milagro



The championship returned from its back-to-back American adventure with the battle between the top riders as tight as ever; 19 points separated Spanish rivals Jorge Lorenzo and Dani Pedrosa after Mugello, and now two races later the gap is only 18, with seven rounds to go. Casey Stoner meanwhile, comes back across the Atlantic two points worse off, 39 behind, but nursing a nasty ankle injury.

It is Lorenzo who will return to Europe the happiest, after two races in which his Yamaha has not performed at its best and he has put together two second place finishes behind each of his challengers for the title. The factory have also managed his engines well, and now he has two new ones left for the remaining seven races.

Pedrosa put in an excellent weekend in Indianapolis, taking the clean sweep of pole, fastest lap and race win, and although it was just a second victory of the season for him he is stringing together his best year ever in MotoGP. His total of 207 points is the highest points score he has ever achieved in the class after the first eleven races, with his previous best at this stage 183 in 2010. If he can stay injury-free, he will definitely be in the reckoning come Valencia.

On the other side of the Repsol Honda garage, any doubts about Casey Stoner's motivation to reclaim his crown after announcing his retirement were quickly dispelled when he decided to participate at Indianapolis. With torn ligaments, chipped ankle bones and a severely bruised shin-bone, he could have been forgiven for throwing in the towel, but after a last-minute painkilling injection he battled through to a creditable fourth and was clearly shattered after the experience.

The Aussie had been unlucky not to snatch third, having lost two positions when Ben Spies' Yamaha expired on the main straight and sent a curtain of white smoke billowing across the track. Onboard shots of the trailing riders clearly demonstrated the complete lack of vision suffered by the trailing group, and it was Stoner who came off worst. He will hope that his injuries have improved by Brno and he is able to attack again, but it is fair to say his title hopes are hanging by the remaining ligament in his right ankle, as it is hard to see both Lorenzo and Pedrosa making the kind of mistakes that would see them lose such an advantage in the remaining events.



Ligaments and bone chips. Stoner raced in these conditions to keep a hand in the title chase and handed the stage to his team-mate for Repsol Honda to win for the second year on the trot at the Brickyard



The reverse side of the Yamaha coin is that things are going from bad to worse for Ben Spies, who must have smashed a few mirrors this season. His engine failure has started to put strain on the relationship between the American and the tuning fork brand, who will go their separate ways at the end of this year, and post-race Spies even confessed to the assembled media, "I was told by somebody at Yamaha that if I'm not going to ride a hundred percent at Laguna (Seca), don't show up. I've given my hundred percent. So to be told what I was told after Mugello and the way it was, and then to give the effort I've given the last two weekends, I just don't think it's been too fair."

Ducati's weekend in Indianapolis was yet another one to forget, not only is the seat alongside Hayden for 2013 still not resolved, but the American was unable to take part in his home GP. Valentino Rossi meanwhile was as dejected as he has been all season, after limping home in seventh place a mammoth 57 seconds behind the winner Pedrosa and only 13 ahead of top CRT Yonny Hernandez, who in turn looked impressive dealing with the lack of grip.

No doubt Indianapolis Motor Speedway will look closely at the grip issues once more, pro-active as the circuit always is to maintain its status as the premier motorsports venue in the world. Last year they relaid much of the track to deal with the bumps that had previously been problematic, and even organised a Grand-Am race on the infield circuit earlier this year to try and improve the asphalt's surface.

However the crashes which affected the participation of two of its American heroes in Spies and Hayden, and injured Stoner and Hector Barberá long-term will lead them to review the situation and see if the track can be improved to prevent its part in the crashes.

IMS are clearly delighted to have MotoGP back again next year as confirmed in a post-race press release which announced tickets already on sale for 2013, and with over 65,000 fans through the gates and Dani Pedrosa's endorsement that the track is definitely safe, this will encourage them to maybe spend money to ensure there is an even longer future at the historic raceway.



The face says it all for Nicky Hayden after his painful highside. The American couldn't race at home...a shame for many reasons, one of those being the absence of a very cool helmet design showing the racer's jawbone

Pedrosa went one better after finishing second in 2011. The race was a processional affair but the Spaniard was able to rule on one of the trickiest tracks of the series





The moment of Cal Crutchlow's DNF and coupled with his 11th position from 2011 means Indianapolis is not one of his more memorable venues. The Brit's services for 2013 are still without a firm destination





PLAY





After a long racing career with Honda, Dovi is considering his third different bike in three years. The Italian is undoubtedly one of MotoGP's leading riders but not quite of 'Alien' status just yet

CLASSIFICATION & WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

MotoGP RESULT

Riders

1	Dani Pedrosa, SPA	Honda
2	Jorge Lorenzo, SPA	Yamaha
3	Andrea Dovizioso, ITA	Yamaha
4	Casey Stoner, AUS	Honda
5	Alvaro Bautista, SPA	Honda

MotoGP CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 11 OF 18 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Jorge Lorenzo	225
2 Dani Pedrosa	207
3 Casey Stoner	186
4 Andrea Dovizioso	137
5 Cal Crutchlow	106



Moto2 RESULT

Riders

1	Marc Marquez, SPA	Suter
2	Pol Espargaro, SPA	Kalex
3	Julian Simon, SPA	Suter
4	Mika Kallio, FIN	Kalex
5	Thomas Luthi, SUI	Suter

Moto2 CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 10 OF 17 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Marc Marquez	188
2 Pol Espargaro	149
3 Andrea Iannone	136
4 Thomas Luthi	134
5 Scott Redding	106

Moto3 RESULT

Riders

1	Luis Salom, SPA	Kalex KTM
2	Sandro Cortese, GER	KTM
3	Jonas Folger, GER	Kalex KTM
4	Miguel Oliveira, SPA	Suter Honda
5	Romano Fenati, ITA	FTR Honda

Moto3 CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 10 OF 17 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Sandro Cortese	184
2 Maverick Viñales	155
3 Luis Salom	129
4 Romano Fenati	96
5 Alexis Masbou	81



Two on the trot for
Marquez at Indy...

HAYDEN TO SIT-OUT BRNO

Nicky Hayden will forego the Czech Republic GP to focus on a racing return at Ducati's second home GP at Misano in a month's time after he missed out at Indianapolis. The Kentucky Kid was forced to sit on the sidelines and watch from the garage at the American track located just three hours from his Owensboro home after he suffered concussion and two small fractures to the second and third metacarpals of his right hand.

"It's tough to miss another race," he said. "I don't have big problems but my hand is still very swollen and I don't have much strength, and of course right-hand injuries are worse for motorcycle racers. I would have been at far less than 100 per cent and if I used too much force or crashed again, I could displace the breaks and possibly be in big trouble. Obviously, the head is even more important, and with the amount of time I was unconscious, I'm still dealing with a headache.

The main thing is all the doctors told me racing was a really bad idea and not smart, and everybody on my team agreed. As much as the racer in me doesn't like staying at home and missing track time and points, I need to listen to the experts and try to heal up and get ready for Misano. That's an important race for me and for Ducati, and I'll be doing all the rehab to come back as fit as possible. I don't like it, but it's the right thing to do."

There was a silver lining to his crash however, after his heavily pregnant sister Jenny was taken into labour upon viewing the incident at home in Kentucky. The Hayden family celebrated a new addition on the morning of race-day, and we're betting that there's every chance the little girl may well be called Indy or something similar.

Meanwhile Toni Elias will again deputise for Hector Barbera in the Czech Republic on the Pramac Ducati.





Ducati Corse Press

DUCATI PLANS STILL UNCLEAR

There is still much confusion over who will race the Desmosedici next season, with Nicky Hayden currently the only confirmed name for the Borgo Panigale factory. Andrea Dovizioso was less than coy when he was asked about their approaches for 2012, all but admitting a deal was in the offing but it is the confusion surrounding the fate of the satellite bikes which is most intriguing.

Cal Crutchlow went public on the issue this week, informing the Italian daily Gazzetta dello Sport "for three months they lied to me and even at Laguna Seca they told me they would give me a factory bike. After that no one contacted me anymore." He was also vocal about their subsequent offers of a satellite ride, which have also diminished in recent weeks.

The Cardion Ab team look unlikely to continue next season after a disastrous year for Karel Abraham Jr., whilst the parent company of Pramac went into liquidation in May. Tests for Scott Redding and Andrea Iannone at Mugello in the summer break pointed to the creation of a much-vaunted "Ducati Junior Team", but sources inside Marc VDS Racing suggest the goalposts have moved on this more than once, and a deal looks further away than expected following the successful test in Italy.

No doubt Audi's fledgling takeover is still a factor in hesitant decision-making at Ducati, but if the factory wishes to deflect flak after two horrible seasons, then they need to act swiftly to rectify matters.

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ROSSI READY FOR TUNE-UP...

By Gavin Emmett

Valentino Rossi's return to Yamaha is like that of the veteran rocker who has taken his years out in the wilderness after going platinum when he was young, but who still feels he has one big tour left in him. There's hardly any questioning the fact that he will put on a good show for his loyal fans, but is he going to be able to hit those high notes that he became famous for once again?

The hardcore Rossi supporters are raucously delighted, the Ducatisti are up in arms, whilst the rest of us quietly wonder to ourselves whether Rossi still has what it takes to cut it amongst the metronomic MotoGP A-list.

Rossi's return is like a veteran rocker on a last tour. Can he hit the notes he was famous for?

It's not that I'm surprised by his choice to return to the factory where he enjoyed such success; on the surface it would seem a wise decision considering the funk he has found himself in at Ducati. However it is a massive leap of faith. Faith in his own ability to curtail the ever-more impressive consistency of his former and future team-mate Jorge Lorenzo. It is a real climb-down for the multi-champion, and his pride will have taken some swallowing.

Don't forget, it was Lorenzo's rise to power that prompted Rossi's shunting from the factory Yamaha team. It was his increasingly stunning pace that built the wall between the two of them in the garage.

And it was Jorge Lorenzo's desirability to Yamaha that eventually forced Rossi's hand into trying his luck with the red bike.

I'm not the only member of the press to have witnessed Rossi's own ascent to superstardom from close quarters, and after the joy he has given everyone over the years, his forlorn figure has been no fun to see over the last couple of seasons. By the same token however, I'm not the only one in the media centre asking whether he might have gained more personally from sticking with Ducati and turning his home factory back into race-winners. Or at least giving everything in trying to do so.

The 'plus-size' lady hasn't quite belted out the last tune on Valentino Rossi's career just yet, but the jury is out on whether the Italian's return to Yamaha will be a chart success or not.





CROSSING THE LINE

WORKING THE PRESS IN MotoGP

By Adam Wheeler, Photos by Ducati Corse Press/Milagro

Chris Jonnum moved from the role of journalist to the 'other side of the interview table' as Ducati MotoGP Press Officer last year. It means the American is one of the few to switch perspectives on the vast media output of MotoGP. He has certainly had his hands full dealing with the PR behemoth around Valentino Rossi but is also fortunate to have the

consummate professionalism of countryman Nicky Hayden to rely on and will do again for 2013. With Jonnum's previous job as editor of Road RacerX magazine and now part of the Italian marque's most foremost marketing face, he is well positioned to offer his views on how the media machine works in motorcycle racing's premier series...

How was it making the transition ‘across the fence’ from media to a media service role? Obviously your experience helped to formulate a plan for what the press need and how Ducati can benefit....

As you would expect my past experience definitely helps me to relate to journalists and to know what they want and what will be useful to them. That said, the jobs are surprisingly different, and I think your fence analogy is appropriate. In the past, I spent a lot of time on one side of the fence and got to know it very, very well, to the point that I was honestly a little tired of it. When I first moved over to this side, it was still recognizable as the same fence, but it was also quite unfamiliar in many ways. The more time I spend on this side, the better I get to know it and the better I get at my job. I’m enjoying being on this side now, though I’ll always have a lot of respect for those on the other side. I can report that at least in this case the grass is pretty green on both sides....

Key duties...?

As is the case with all MotoGP riders, Valentino Rossi and Nicky Hayden’s primary obligations are on the racetrack and in the garage. That’s as it should be, but they both have important responsibilities with the media and with our sponsors. At the races, these include participation in the organizer’s official press conferences; our own daily press debriefings (which are essentially mini-press conferences that we host in the Ducati Team hospitality unit); one-to-one interviews; autograph signings; promotional activities for the organizer or circuits; VIP Village appearances; and on-stage interviews for sponsors. As Press Officer, my main duty is to plan and oversee those activities for Nicky, doing whatever I can to make

them run as smoothly as possible. Our Press Manager Federica De Zottis does the same for Valentino in addition to managing the department. Together, we write the daily press release in Italian and English, distribute it, and select images from the team photographer and post them on Ducati’s media website. I also spend a lot of time in the pressroom so that journalists have a point of contact with the team during the race weekends. Nicky also regularly does PR appearances between races, as well as the occasional media appointment. I help to schedule and coordinate those, and I often attend them as well. In addition, I regularly post to Ducati’s Twitter timeline and help Nicky maintain his Facebook page and personal website, www.nickyhayden.com (although he handles his Twitter account completely on his own). As with most jobs, there are a wide variety of miscellaneous duties but these are the main ones.

Was the allure of ‘red’ and the fame and prestige of the brand a major reason for taking the job?

I have to admit that it was. Having spent a lot of time in Italy for many years, I’ve been a fan of Ducati for a long time. The bikes are great and unique and the image and brand are really second to none. I’m such a fan that while I was still a journalist, I started two books on Ducati—one on the Ducati Museum and another on the Desmosedici RR. I’ve now finished the manuscripts for both, and they’ll be produced and distributed by David Bull Publishing (the same publisher that I worked with for my Hayden family biography, *From OWB to MotoGP*, in 2007). So yes, when I got this opportunity, I grabbed it with both hands.





In which ways is the job different from what you thought it would be?

Maybe the biggest adjustment was going from working remotely for a family-owned company to working for a firm that, while relatively small compared to some other manufacturers, nonetheless employs a relatively sizeable workforce. There were obviously some advantages to working and traveling with the independence I had before but it also got a bit lonely sometimes. I'm very much enjoying being part of a group of people who are pulling in the same direction—literally, a team.

There is a degree of cynicism from some of the older hacks towards the racing PR machine. What's your view?

Well, I'm an American, and the PR profession is actually pretty well respected in the U.S., while journalism's image has taken a bit of a beating. Of course most of my work is done outside of my native country, but while I admit that I do occasionally get a bit of attitude, I

have to say that it's the exception rather than the rule. Not that I'd let it bother me anyway; I take my job seriously, just as I do that of the journalists. I think that both are worthy professions in which you find some people who are competent and others who are less so.

Is there too much sanitisation or do the PRs, briefings etc provide valuable access and outlets?

Obviously a PR person has to consider the image of the employer, team, and sponsors, but that doesn't mean we have to deal in propaganda. By and large, motorcycle journalists and fans are a pretty smart lot, so they see through that sort of fluff anyway. Unless there's a good reason to do otherwise, I think the best approach is to be as open as possible, because that makes for interesting stories. At the same time, I don't think it's realistic to expect teams to disclose information that could hurt their competitiveness. We can't accommodate journalists' every request but I can often come



up with an alternative option. The bottom line is that our press releases get used and read liberally, we get strong turnouts at our media debriefings, and we receive a lot of requests for interviews with our riders. I can only conclude that outlets find these tools and opportunities to be valuable.

In what ways could racing PR be improved further? Should there be more interaction? More effective use of socmed?

I never get tired of seeing the riders interact directly with the fans. Those live moments are almost always magical, and I don't think you can ever have enough of them. The challenge is obviously working out how to do it without adversely affecting the riders' and team's on-track performance, but we need to always look for those opportunities where we can. While it's not the same as the real deal, social media is a great way for teams and particularly riders to approximate that interaction with the public. Ducati is very active on Facebook and

Twitter, and while it's a relatively new field that the whole world is still working out how to best utilize, I think our company approaches it with a pretty good balance of professionalism and fun.

Some could say you have an easy deal in working with Nicky and then a complete contrast with the demands and attention around Valentino. Is that the case?

Valentino's popularity is obviously on a scale that's unmatched by all but a few athletes or celebrities in any field, but Nicky has a very strong following as well. That said it's true that working with Nicky is relatively easy, for the simple reason that he's such a professional. He makes himself available for media or PR work whenever reasonably possible, he's extremely punctual and he is among the best in the business at actually performing those duties. It can be monotonous for the riders but Nicky is great at being present and spontaneous.



He puts journalists, fans, and sponsors at ease and comes across as a great guy with whom you'd like to hang out. I consider our relationship to be more professional than social, but I've gotten to know him well enough over the years that I can say his image is not an act. You'd be hard-pressed to find a more genuine person, a harder worker, or a better example to follow on or off the racetrack. I honestly consider it a privilege to work with him.

What are the pros and cons of being with both of these racers?

I think most people in media relations or public relations would kill to work with riders like Vale and Nicky, for obvious reasons, but doing so also brings no small amount of pressure—the higher the tightrope, the higher the consequences if you screw up. Still, that just keeps things interesting and motivating and I wouldn't have it any other way.

Eighteen races, tests and a posture that fits a plane seat. Does working in MotoGP (especially for a family man) have a natural life span do you think?

Missing family is definitely the hardest part of the job. I occasionally bring my wife and daughter to events, but I've found that I'm so busy and focused during race weekends that

I'm not very good company. On the other hand, because my job is carried out primarily at the events, I can be relatively present for my family between race weekends—maybe more so than people at more traditional jobs. Apart from that, my main concern is that I have the opportunity to continue to learn and grow. There are a lot of people who have been in this paddock for a long time. I'm only in my second season full-time, so we'll see how it goes.

Do you enjoy the paddock existence? What do you like/dislike?

One of my favourite aspects of the paddock is our team's hospitality unit—not because it's fancy or exclusive, but because it's home away from home. At the end of a long day (and believe me, the days are long in this line of work), I love having an oasis where I can unwind with my colleagues over a plate of good Italian food and a glass of beer. On the downside, although we travel so much, it sometimes seems like all we see of these places are airports, hotels, and race circuits. As someone who has lived in five different countries and done a lot of recreational traveling, I wish we had more opportunities to experience the local culture. Still, the vast majority of people in the MotoGP paddock are top-shelf, and it's a pleasure to work, travel, and hang out with them.





ALPINESTARS

There won't be a shortage of Alpinestars products on these pages, firstly due to the prolificacy of quality material that emanates from the Asolo factory floors but also the range of the items the famous firm continue to create.

From fashion to protection, 'AS' has it all and this issue the garments that caught our eyes were the **Crest** enduro jacket and pant ensemble. Needless to say it is light, durable and all-weather, and the jacket is designed to accommodate the Bionic Neck Support.

It looks the part too.

Expect around 190 euros for the jacket and 150 for the pants. A worthy mention is the A6 chest protector, also on show.





DC SHOES

There are few cooler brands in extreme sports than DC Shoes. Even if Ken's rally car antics might be your first experience with the distinctive logo there is every chance the footwear or casualwear have grabbed some attention in the high street.

We ran a small feature on the American firm a few issues ago after we visited their creative Huntington Beach hub but here are several of their wares, including the **Travis Pastrana Unilite trainer**.

This product sees a shift for DC; from making their athletes look cool to actually providing some performance 'support'.





MSR

One of MSR's 2013 **Axxis** shades is this cool BLK/ CYN. The jersey is a poly knit v-neck collar with rib knit elastic micro cuffs, a raglan cut promoting airflow and is made with a lightweight 100% spun-poly construction.

The glove involves stretch poly and spandex fabrics for backhand and finger panels, with printed graphics and rubber logos, Lycra stretch panels on sides of fingers for optimum flexibility and synthetic palm and thumb panel for wear resistance and comfort.

Click on the link for more info and on the glove for a UK store.









VOLCOM

Volcom is a young, creative and vibrant brand established at the beginning of the 1990s and focusing on Snow, Skate, Surf and Motocross.

The fact that the likes of Ryan Villopoto, Dean Wilson, Blake Baggett and Gautier Paulin can be found sporting their fetching casualwear indicates the ambition of the company.

There is a lot going on with the 'Youth against establishment' scene and it is definitely worth spending a minute or two searching through their website. Here we show a few items of the RV line





BACKPAGE

2012 Monster Energy girls
By Milagro





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'On-track Off-road' is a free, bi-weekly publication for the screen focused on bringing the latest perspectives on events, blogs and some of the very finest photography from the three worlds of the FIM Motocross World Championship, the AMA Motocross and Supercross series' and MotoGP. 'On-track Off-road' will be published online at www.ontrackoffroad.com every other Tuesday. To receive an email notification that a new issue available with a brief description of each edition's contents simply enter an address in the box provided on the homepage. All email addresses will be kept strictly confidential and only used for purposes connected with OTOR.

Adam Wheeler Editor and FIM MXGP correspondent

Ray Archer Photographer

Steve Cox Photo-journalist and AMA MX and SX correspondent

Steve Matthes AMA MX and SX correspondent

Matthew Roberts Television Presenter and MotoGP correspondent

Gavin Emmett TV commentator/Presenter and MotoGP correspondent

Núria Garcia, Paula Mastrangelo & Tactilestudio Design

Gabi Álvarez Web developer

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